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ABSTRACT

The School Survey provides a needs assessment technique for county alcohol and drug abuse agencies. The survey was designed for students in grades seven through twelve. Recommendations were made to survey only seventh, tenth, and twelfth graders. These proved to be representative of the secondary school population. Localized surveys of South Carolina adolescents were developed and combined to produce a quasi-random state survey. A survey instrument was created using some items from the instruments used in earlier studies. A factor analysis of the results of the initial survey resulted in the elimination of items referring to parental alcohol use. The three factors addressed by the survey were general drug use, availability of drugs, and general alcohol use. School officials must be consulted and agree in seven basic areas. These include the survey instrument, grade levels surveyed, level at which the survey is representative, basis for displaying data, control and release of data in writing, permission for the state office to maintain data for cumulative results and recommendations for survey administration. A good coordination of effort between school officials and the survey coordinator is essential to success. (DWH)

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THE SCHOOL SURVEY APPROACH IN DETERMINING ADOLESCENT ALCOHOL AND DRUG ABUSE

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Background and Development

Drug and alcohol surveys of varying complexity administered to high school students in South Carolina date back to 1969. The purpose of this paper is to discuss the development of these different surveys into the process that is currently used by the South Carolina Commission on Alcohol and Drug Abuse (SCCADA) and to present some of the results from the past two years. The first survey that these authors are aware of was a statewide survey of high school seniors in 1969 done jointly by the then Commission on Alcoholism and the Department of Education. The information was obtained to be used for planning purposes. The next survey was done in 1971 by Drs. Milne and Vincent of the University of South Carolina under the auspices of the Commission on Narcotics and Controlled Substances. The purpose of the survey was to obtain an adequate estimate of the extent of drug use by students in South Carolina. The third survey took place in 1973. Its scope was somewhat larger than the previous two; surveying 4th, 7th, 10th and 12th graders using a statewide stratified random design. This survey was done by the Department of Education to obtain data for use in the development of substance abuse education programs.

These three surveys provided all the data available on South Carolina high school student substance use and abuse until 1978. By this time, the data was a minimum of five years old and its relevance to current planning efforts were questionable. However, conducting another statewide survey would have been an expensive undertaking, too costly to be seriously considered.

At this time several of the county treatment agencies expressed a need for data at the county level for needs assessment. They asked assistance from the state commission in obtaining a questionnaire and procedures by which they could conduct an acceptable survey of high school students. We

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quickly relized that these localized surveys could be combined to produce a quasi-random state survey and so began to develop the current procedures. A survey instrument was the first necessity. It had to be fairly easy to administer, since few if any of the local personnel were trained interviewers; it had to be short enough to be completed in an average school period and last but by no means least, it had to obtain sensitive information without offending the sensibilities of school officials. Earlier literature searches for substance use instruments had left us aware of none that fulfilled these requirements. Therefore we decided to create our own. Copies of the instruments used by the three earlier surveys were available and also a copy of an instrument developed by SCCADA for use by one particular agency. All these were examined and items selected from them to form the skeleton of the new instrument. Additional items were added to complete it.

No pilot test was planned, since the instrument had been requested as soon as possible and the majority of the items came from earlier surveys, which had been pretested. Instead, it was decided to use the first year as a pilot test and review the results at the end of the year.

By the end of the year four counties had performed surveys of almost seven thousand students. Their records were combined into one data file and factor analyzed. The analysis results suggested that several items be removed from the survey. Two of these items were asking the extent of the mother and father's alcohol use. These two items had already received a very negative response. One school board refused to allow the survey unless these items were deleted and students from all the counties scrawled messages to "stay out of my home life," "leave my parents alone," "none of your business," etc. Apparently parents use is a much more sensitive issue than one's own use to a high school student.

The results of the factor analysis showed that the survey addressed several separate factors. One seemed to be addressing general alcohol use and the surrounding circumstances, another general drug use, and interestingly, a separate factor concerning the availability of drugs. These were the areas in which we were interested in obtaining information so we were satisifed with these results.

There was another factor that loaded questions involving inhalent and over-the-counter drug use and parents' use of alcohol. This at first seemed a rather bizzare combination of questions, however, a friend in the treatment

field did not find it surprising. She said that it was her opinion and was supported by available literature, that adolescents involved in these particular drugs tended to be more seriously emotionally disturbed, which in turn ties into high alcohol abuse by parents. The appearance of this factor is quite interesting in light of this.

The end result of this process was Form II which was used during the 1979-80 school year by nine agencies covering eleven counties. By combining the two years we had surveys from 15 of the 46 counties in South Carolina to use as a statewide sample. The results discussed later in this paper come from this file.

Procedure

The School Survey was designed to provide a needs assessment technique for county alcohol and drug abuse agencies. The procedures developed were written to accommodate this purpose. Prior to the school year, information was transmitted to local agencies providing them with the recommended process for making preparatory arrangements, selecting a sample, and administering the survey. It also informed them of the availability of keying services and who to contact for additional technical assistance.

The preparatory arrangements were considered the key to the success of the entire project. If these were made too hastily or incompletely chances were slim that the school survey could be completed. The basic questions to be considered prior to commencement included:

1. What grades are to be considered in the survey? The survey was designed for grades 7-12, but recommendations were made to use only the 7th, 10th, and 12th grades. It was hypothesized that these grades would be typical of the 7-12 grade population. This hypothesis was later shown to be true from the actual data.
2. What schools are to be included in the survey? This is important in that arrangements need to be made with each school. Also, consideration needs to be given to the inclusion of private schools.
3. At what level is it desired to have the survey representative? The smaller the unit the more individuals must be included in the sample.

After these questions are decided the next step is to contact school officials. In some areas the superintendent is the highest individual from which approval must be granted. In others, the county school board

requires approval rights. There are seven basic areas where agreement must be reached.

1. The survey instrument. Often school boards will not approve certain questions. These must be negotiated.
2. Grades levels to be included in the survey.
3. Level at which the survey is to be representative.
4. Basis for displaying the data.
5. The control and release of the survey data. This should be in writing.
6. Permission for the state office to maintain data for cumulative results, not county specific.
7. Recommendations for survey administration.

Once these are decided the emphasis can be turned to a sampling procedure. The sampling procedure recommended was a modified random sample. Once it was assured that students were assigned to homerooms on a fairly random basis (alphabetical assignment is good) a sample of homerooms could be taken from each grade to be tested. The homerooms were to be selected randomly and surveyed at 100%. The minimal sample size we recommended was 20% or 200 whichever was greater. Once a sample was chosen, if a casual review revealed a strong bias, the sample could be discarded and the process repeated. But once a sample was approved, it was not allowed to be altered. Often teachers or the principal may try to switch classrooms for one reason or another. It is important that this does not occur or the randomness may be lost.

Some modifications in sampling that occurred in the course of the survey included using English classes instead of homerooms. This allowed those administering the instrument more time to do so. Many counties decided on a 100% sample. Another county used study halls. This was discouraged because certain types of students do not have study halls. Specifically, those in band and other extracurricular activities.

Recommendations were also made concerning the administration of the survey. They included the following:

1. A survey should not be conducted at a time when an unusual or highly publicized event concerning alcohol or drug use/abuse has occurred in a locality.
2. The schools and classrooms to be included in the survey must be selected sufficiently far in advance of the survey date, and this

information communicated to appropriate school officials to enable the school to make arrangements for survey administration.

3. If at all possible, the survey should be administered on the same day in all locations to be surveyed.
4. It is most important that the survey take place without advance knowledge on the part of students that such a survey is to occur.
5. Surveys should be administered by regular classroom teachers, in regular classroom settings, if possible.
6. The following information and materials must be available to each teacher for survey administration.
   A. A sufficient number of survey questionnaires for each student and teacher to have one, with extras (at least 10%) available in the event of unusuable survey forms.
   B. A supply of pencils with erasers, in case all students do not have a pencil.
   C. Clear instructions concerning the manner in which the survey is to be administered.
   D. Instructions to be read by the teacher to the students.

   Instruction sheets were provided for both the teachers and the students.

The problems encountered in the administration of the survey were primarily due to lack of support by school officials. In many instances the survey coordinator had to administer all of the surveys. This re-emphasizes the need to establish a good coordination of effort early in the process.

Results

To maximize the available information and minimize the computer time required to produce reports, the format for reports was chosen as illustrated in tables 1 and 2. This provides totals on all questions as well as information by districts and schools within districts. It also gives the necessary cross tabulations on the demographics. It was felt that these results needed to be as simple but as comprehensive as possible considering the lack of statistical training among the readers.

TABLE 1
SCHOOL ALCOHOL AND DRUG USE QUESTIONNAIRE
STAFF TOTALS FORM 2
MAY 1980

	7th Grade N=2481		8th Grade N=1108		9th Grade N=1077		10th Grade N=2534		12th Grade N=1861		Total N=10070	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
5. How often do you smoke tobacco cigarettes?												
1. A pack or more a day	20	0.80	19	1.72	55	5.12	99	7.99	128	6.90	401	3.99
2. One half pack a day	80	3.23	56	5.07	85	7.91	204	8.07	178	9.59	716	7.13
3. A pack a week	57	2.30	48	4.34	58	5.40	101	3.99	94	5.06	403	4.01
4. Less than a pack a week	172	6.96	108	9.78	109	10.14	216	8.55	136	7.33	813	8.10
5. Don't smoke	2141	86.68	873	79.07	767	71.41	1906	57.45	1319	71.10	7701	76.74
Total	2470	100.00	1104	100.00	1074	100.00	2526	100.00	1855	100.0	10034	100.0
6. How old were you when you first used any kind of alcoholic beverage?												
1. 10 years or younger	356	14.43	134	12.17	113	10.53	194	7.67	113	6.09	980	9.77
2. 11-13 years old	399	16.17	256	23.25	309	28.79	499	19.74	275	14.82	1917	19.12
3. 14-16 years old	39	1.58	45	4.08	200	18.63	818	32.37	822	44.31	2350	23.43
4. 17 years old or older	4	0.16	0	0.00	3	0.27	31	1.22	228	12.29	297	2.96
5. I have never used any alcohol bev.	1669	67.65	666	60.49	448	41.75	985	38.97	417	22.47	4482	44.70
Total	2467	100.00	1101	100.00	1073	100.00	2527	100.00	1855	100.0	10026	100
7. Do you know anyone who is now having problems because of drinking too much?												
1. No	1314	53.24	558	50.54	567	52.69	1216	48.12	830	44.74	4980	49.63
2. Yes, a member of my immediate family	243	9.84	122	11.05	134	12.45	235	9.29	203	10.94	1037	10.33
3. Yes, a member of my immediate family but not my mother, father, brother, or sister.	401	16.24	175	15.85	124	11.52	345	13.65	249	13.42	1413	14.08
4. Yes, a member of a friend's family	228	9.23	76	6.88	86	7.99	203	8.03	175	9.43	855	8.52
5. Yes, a school friend or neighbor	282	11.42	173	15.67	165	15.33	528	20.89	398	21.45	1749	17.43
Total	2468	100.00	1104	100.00	1076	100.00	2527	100.00	1855	100.0	10034	100.0

TABLE 2

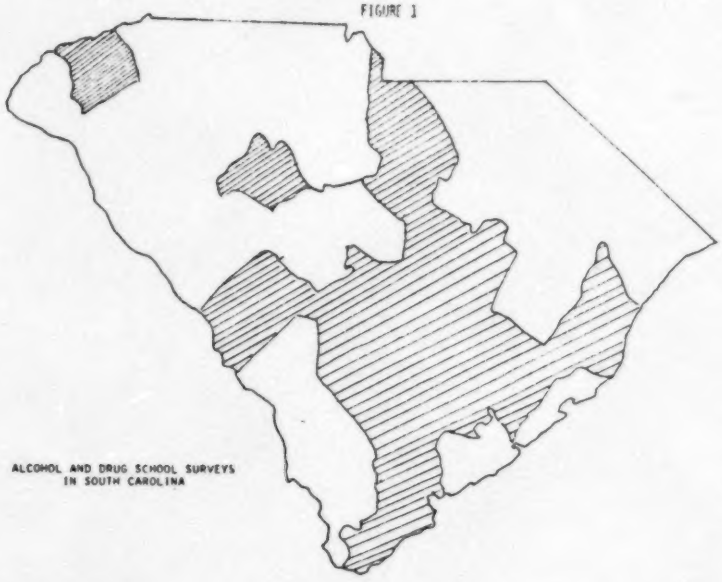
SCHOOL ALCOHOL AND DRUG USE QUESTIONNAIRE
STATE TOTALS FORM 2

TABLE OF GRADE BY RACE

GRADE / RACE FREQUENCY PERCENT ROW PCT COL PCT	WHITE	BLACK	AMER-INDIAN	ORIENTAL	OTHER	TOTAL
7th	1290	1102	36	7	28	2463
	12.87	10.09	0.36	0.07	0.28	24.57
	52.38	44.74	1.46	0.28	1.14	
	23.36	25.72	30.77	18.42	45.16	
8th	652	424	16	4	6	1102
	6.50	4.23	0.16	0.04	0.06	10.99
	58.17	38.49	1.45	0.36	0.54	
	11.61	9.89	13.68	10.53	9.68	
9th	703	341	16	4	9	1073
	7.01	3.40	0.16	0.04	0.09	10.70
	65.52	31.78	1.49	0.37	0.84	
	12.73	7.96	13.68	10.53	14.52	
10th	1307	1177	27	10	6	2527
	17.04	11.74	0.27	0.10	0.06	25.21
	51.22	46.58	1.07	0.40	0.24	
	23.63	27.47	23.08	26.32	9.68	
11th	638	343	10	5	4	1000
	6.63	3.42	0.10	0.05	0.04	9.98
	63.80	34.30	1.00	0.50	0.40	
	11.55	8.00	8.55	13.16	6.45	
12th	933	898	12	8	9	1860
	9.31	8.96	0.12	0.08	0.09	18.55
	50.16	48.28	0.65	0.43	0.48	
	16.89	20.96	10.26	21.05	14.52	
TOTAL	5523	4285	117	38	62	10025
	55.09	42.74	1.17	0.38	0.62	100.00

In looking at the results accumulated on those surveys performed, it should be pointed out that the surveys were not performed in all South Carolina school districts. The map in Figure 1 shows the areas where it was given. Our total sample population was 17,000.

FIGURE 1



With this limitation in mind, it was found that 42% of all students had never used alcohol. Of the 58% who had, most had started between th ages of 14 and 16 years. Twenty-one percent were drinking weekly with close friends mostly, and 51% of all the youths knew someone with a perceived alcohol problem.

It was also found that 72% of the young people did not smoke. As far as drug usage, Table 3 shows the percentages of those who have every used these drugs.

TABLE 3

DRUG USAGE IN S.C. HIGH SCHOOL POPULATION

DRUG	% EVER USED
MARAJUANA	28%
COCAINE	6%
OPIATES	2.5%
DEPRESSANTS	8%
INHALANTS	6.5%
HALLUCINOGENS	4%
PCP	5%

Table 4 compares the results recorded on seniors in South Carolina with the national study done by NIDA of seniors in 1978.

TABLE 4

COMPARISON OF S.C. SENIORS WITH *NATIONAL SENIORS IN ALCOHOL AND DRUG USE

DRUG	S.C. USE	NATIONAL USE
ALCOHOL	77%	93%
MARAJUANA	40%	59%
COCAINE	8%	12.9%
OPIATES	2.5%	11.5%
DEPRESANTS	11%	16%
INHALANTS	5%	12%
HALLUCINOGENS	7%	14.3%

* TAKEN FROM 'DRUGS AND THE CLASS OF '78', NIDA, 1979.

To see how usage varies with grades, Figure 2 shows the change in alcohol usage and tobacco usage across grades. Figure 3 illustrate the same information for marijuana usage.

FIGURE 2

ALCOHOL AND CIGARETTE USAGE ACROSS GRADES

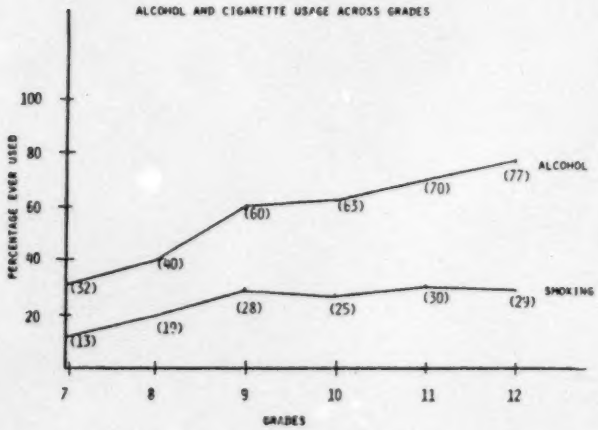
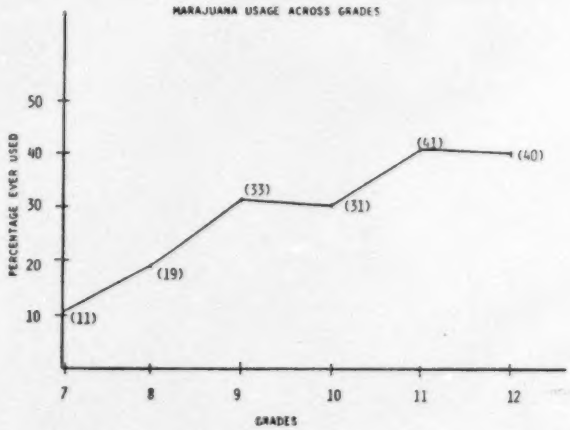


FIGURE 3

MARAJUANA USAGE ACROSS GRADES



Finally, the various drugs were examined to see which combinations were the most prevalent. Alcohol and marijuana was the most prevalent with 15% of the students using this comination. The second most common was marijuana and depressants being used in combination by 7% of the students. It is also noted that only 28% of the students used any combination of drugs at all.

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